

The Greener Cleaner

Noam Frankel, a Chicago businessman, was looking for a new business to invest in. His interest was piqued by an alternative to dry cleaning that the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) was promoting. Encouraged by European successes with this technology, the CNT had joined the EPA's Design for the Environment Dry Cleaning project which aimed to find and test alternatives to dry cleaning with toxic chemicals. Not only was this new technology, wet-cleaning, an environmentally safer way to clean clothes, but to Frankel it seemed like it was a good investment from a cost perspective as well. Frankel opened his shop, *The Greener Cleaner*, in Chicago last year.

With funding from the EPA and a willing business partner in Frankel, CNT is now evaluating the commercial viability of wet-cleaning using business information from *The Greener Cleaner*. CNT's interim report shows that the wet-cleaning does appear to be comparable in cost and performance to dry cleaning. This may not be new news to *The Greener Cleaner*, or to much of the dry cleaning industry. This past year saw a tremendous jump in the number of dry cleaners now using wetcleaning techniques. A few years ago, wet-cleaning was an untested, and untrusted, idea. Today, there are 100 wet-cleaners in North America and the number seems to be growing daily.

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